Surrey Township Public Library Pandemic

Reopening Procedures & Criteria

The COVID 19 virus has had an unprecedented impact on libraries and the communities they serve. This plan seeks to explore several possible reopening scenarios, each dependent on factors such as recommendations from local and national health agencies, social distancing protocols, and critical community needs. The primary consideration in this plan is maintaining the safety of library patrons and staff while finding ways to provide necessary services that the library is uniquely positioned to perform. The most likely scenario will be a scaled reopening with an incremental easing of physical distancing measures.

In any of the scenarios the Library should implement the following:

1. Improved hygiene procedures for cleaning and disinfecting common areas.

2. Requiring staff to wear protective gear such as masks while administering public services.

3. Continuing to allow teleworking where it makes sense from an operational standpoint.

4. Encourage or require testing of staff for the virus and/or for immunity to the virus.

5. Messaging and plans should be in place to encourage the most vulnerable populations to limit their time in the community and/or allow for service hours that accommodate their needs more specifically.

What if the governor lifts the Stay at Home Order too early? If the Stay at Home Order is lifted before public and staff safety can be assured other factors should be used in determining what level of services the Library should offer. Among these should be:

1. A sustained reduction in new COVID 19 cases within the community for at least 14 days.

2. The healthcare system has the capacity to withstand a moderate outbreak.

3. Community members have access to efficient testing and public health officials are able to trace COVID 19 contacts

4. The library has access to the necessary materials to maintain high hygiene standards.

5. The library has access to enough staffing to run all of its core operations

Below are a number of reopening scenarios divided by service area. How each is instituted should be determined by local recommendations, what safety measures can be instituted, and the availability of hygiene supplies and personal protective equipment. Each service area is divided into four scenarios demarcating different levels of restrictions: under a stay at home order, under strict social distancing recommendations, under moderate social distancing recommendations and without any restrictions.

Entrance and Exit into the Building: Restrictions on those coming and going from the building will vary based on the social

distancing recommendations currently in place, especially those establishing recommended limits for gatherings.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Entrance to the building would be restricted to staff performing critical operations and staff obtaining supplies needed to work at home.

- **Gatherings of no more than 10:** Staff could enter and exit the building to obtain materials, and potentially work with members of the public on an appointment basis using appropriate distancing procedures and personal protective equipment.

- **Gatherings of no more than 50:** Staff could resume some desk functions, but the number of people in the building would need to be limited through monitoring procedures during open hours. Separate hours for vulnerable populations could be considered.

- **No distancing limits:** Entrance to the building would not be restricted, though it may still make sense to establish separate hours for vulnerable populations.

Holds pickup: The method for holds pickup could be scaled based on the severity of social distancing recommendations.

- **Under Stay at Home Order**: No holds pick ups should take place. Traveling to the library to obtain materials is by and large not an essential service.

- **Gatherings of no more than 10:** Some version of curbside pickup or self service pickup could be instituted with strong limits on staff contact.

- **Gatherings of no more than 50:** Some version of normal hold pickup could take place using self-checkouts, but limits

would need to be imposed on entrance and exit to the building as well as increased hygiene procedures.

- **No distancing limits:** Normal hold pickups could occur, but depending on recommendations, specialized hours for vulnerable populations could be instituted.

Materials Handling: Materials handling is one of the most complex areas of operations during a pandemic due to the potential of virus transmission on shared objects such as books and DVDs. Current studies suggest the virus remains present on plastic surfaces for up to 72 hours and on cardboard and paper surfaces for up to 24 hours. With this in mind different material types may require different handling or all materials may require quarantine for some period of time. Current recommendations state that using cleaning products such as Lysol, bleach or other disinfectants may not completely remove the virus from surfaces.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Book drops should remain closed and materials handling by staff should be at an absolute minimum. Materials returns are considered non-essential travel under a Stay at Home Order.

- **Gatherings of no more than 10:** If the Stay at Home Order is lifted, it will be possible to reopen book drops. However, materials returned may need to be quarantined for up to 72 hours before being made available to the public or being handled by staff without protective measures.

- **Gatherings of no more than 50:** If social distancing is lessened to the point where medium sized gatherings are allowed, the library will be likely to open for select services, including some circulation of materials. In this scenario it will be necessary to develop protocols for processing materials to be put back into circulation. Chief among these would be finding

space to quarantine materials before they are shelved, go back into circulation, go onto the hold shelf, or are routed to other libraries.

- **No distancing limits:** If distancing limits are lifted completely, materials handling could commence being done in the usual fashion, though with extra protective measures such encouraging staff to wear gloves during the process of sorting items, shelving materials and checking items out to patrons.

Checkouts: Circulation of collections is a core function of the Library, but traditional checkout puts at risk both staff and patrons during a time of virus transition. The goal is to create a balance with restoring this core service and protecting staff and patrons.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Checkouts are limited to electronic services.

- **Gatherings of no more than 10:** Normal checkout procedures could not be managed under this restriction, though in conjunction with curbside hold pickup, some checkouts of physical items could be managed.

- **Gatherings of no more than 50:** Self checkouts could be used, though self check stations would require frequent disinfecting and Limitations would need to be imposed on how many people were in the building at any given time.

- **No distancing limits:** Normal checkout could occur, but depending on recommendations, specialized hours for vulnerable populations could be instituted. Staff may be required to take protective measures such as wearing masks or gloves while assisting patrons.

Programs: The community views library programs as a core service, but as we have seen public gatherings have been one of the main methods by which COVID 19 has been transmitted. With that in mind, the Library needs to be highly cautious about when and how it reinstates programming.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Only virtual programs would be allowed under a Stay at Home Order.

- **Gatherings of no more than 10:** Likewise, only virtual programs would be allowed under this guideline.

- **Gatherings of no more than 50:** If gatherings of up to 50 are allowed, the Library may consider hosting programs geared toward economic development and other critical services only if strong social distancing measures can be employed and only in cases where attendees have pre-registered. Programs such as storytimes would still be disallowed due to the difficulty of enforcing distancing protocols with children.

- **No distancing limits:** If all distancing recommendations are lifted, the Library could return with an active slate of programs with an increased emphasis on economic development focused programs.

Home Delivery: Home delivery, in many cases, is the only way in which elderly or sick patrons receive library services. It often plays an important social role as well. In a pandemic, however, it is another vector of exposure for those who are most likely to become critically ill or die from a virus.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** No home delivery services should be offered because they are not classified as essential travel under a Stay at Home Order.

- **Gatherings of no more than 10:** Some home delivery may be possible on a case by case basis with staff employing extra protective measures such as wearing face masks, gloves and ensuring that all distributed materials have been quarantined for an adequate length of time. To some degree, these services may be limited on a case by case basis by individual residential facilities who may impose stricter limits due to primarily housing vulnerable populations. Staff and those receiving services would be required to follow strict social distancing procedures. Materials should be dropped at doorsteps as opposed to handed to patrons.

- **Gatherings of no more than 50:** Similar to the measures listed above, services could be provided on a case by case basis.

- **No distancing limits:** Services could return to normal, but with increased hygiene procedures implemented.

Internet Access: Internet access is a critical resource for the community especially during times of economic distress. Patrons require internet access to apply for unemployment insurance, access social services, apply for jobs, and access educational resources. Moreover, internet access can be provided to patrons with a limited amount of danger to patrons and staff.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Under these restrictions the Library can boost wireless signals at its locations.

- **Gatherings of no more than 10:** Under these restrictions the Library will provide public computer access by appointment only while continuing to maintain strict social distancing. Equipment will be disinfected between uses.

- **Gatherings of no more than 50:** Under these restrictions the Library will provide public computer access by appointment only, increasing the number of computers

available, while continuing to maintain strict social distancing. Equipment will be disinfected between uses.

- **No distancing limits:** If distancing recommendations are canceled normal use of the Library's computer lab could commence with improved hygiene, including supplying access to disinfectant wipes for both patrons and staff.

Technology Help: The library is frequently a place where patrons learn how to use various forms of technology. The spread of coronavirus and social distancing impose unique difficulties in providing help with devices and on public computers. Because most technology help requires patrons and staff to be at close quarters, there will be limits on how help can be provided until social distancing recommendations are lifted.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** No technology help would be available

- **Gatherings of no more than 10:** Like under the Stay at Home Order technology help would not be provided except in cases where social distancing can be maintained.

- **Gatherings of no more than 50:** Like under the Stay at Home Order technology help would not be provided except in cases where social distancing can be maintained.

- **No distancing limits:** Normal technology help recommendations could commence with improved hygiene procedures.

Materials Processing and Ordering: With physical materials not circulating, processing and ordering materials besides digital materials is of diminished importance. As services begin to scale up as restrictions are lifted, a progressive ramping up of ordering

and processing will be necessary to prepare for demand once the pandemic cycle has ended or slowed.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Ordering should be focused on digital materials and high demand future releases for physical items. Processing of newly arrived orders should wait until some restrictions are lifted or be done in a work from home environment.

- **Gatherings of no more than 10:** Ordering should remain focused on digital materials. As the Stay at Home Order is lifted, it will be time to consider commencing to order more bestsellers and other high circulation new items in preparation for further lifting of gathering or social distancing recommendations. Processing can occur if it can be done safely while maintaining social distance in work spaces.

- **Gatherings of no more than 50:** Ordering and processing of physical materials will ramp up during this period, though it still may be necessary to process materials in shifts so that social distancing can be maintained within work spaces.

- **No distancing limits:** Ordering would continue as normal during this period as budgets allow.

Shared Materials in the Library: Libraries frequently provide access to shared materials in their spaces ranging from office supplies such as staplers and hole punches to equipment like headphones and VR headsets. The Library also provides a wide variety of in-house games and toys. The risks of these shared items vary widely, but any shared items worn around the head and face or toys which children may put in their mouths constitute a high risk as potential vectors for disease transmission.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Under this order no shared items would be provided, excepting the possibility of public printers being used for critical services such as applying for unemployment, obtaining social services and applying for jobs.

- **Gatherings of no more than 10:** As under the Stay at Home Order no shared materials would be offered besides public printers.

- **Gatherings of no more than 50:** Some shared materials could be offered under this recommendation, including shared office supplies as long they are disinfected regularly. Shared headphones, VR headsets, toys and games should not be allowed in circulation.

- **No distancing limits:** Shared office supplies would be allowed, however, as long as the virus continues actively circulating it may be wise to restrict the use of shared headphones, VR headsets and toys.

Possible Scenarios for Phased Reopening

When the Stay at Home Order is lifted a variety of possible scenarios may come to pass. There is the possibility of the complete removal of restrictions, but more likely is a progressive phasing out of restrictions or a possible return to restrictions if the virus begins to spread more actively within the community. Below are some possible scenarios for reopening the library with various restrictions along with possible criteria for when each scenario might be enacted.

Scenario 1: Limited critical services

Criteria

1. The governor's stay at home order has been canceled and regional, state and national health officials no longer recommend the public stay at home.

2. Strong social distancing recommendations remain in place.

3. Gatherings are limited to less than ten people.

4. The healthcare system has the capacity to withstand a moderate outbreak.

5. The library has access to the necessary materials to administer some essential services.

6. The library has access to enough staffing to run said services.

Possible services:

- Access to wireless internet broadcast from library facilities.

- Appointment based access to library computers to be used to secure critical needs.

- Curbside or self-service hold pickup outside the building.

- Access to book drops for library returns.

- Virtual programs

- Assistance via email, chat service and phone.

- Resumption of some home delivery services with enhanced distancing and hygiene procedures.

Preparation:

- Secure staffing for either buildings or library vehicles to provide computer access for essential needs.

- Develop a procedure for curbside pick up.

- Secure and schedule staffing for curbside pick up.

- Secure protective gear for staff working in the public.

- Secure adequate stores of disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer.

- Secure staffing move materials to quarantine.

- Determine a location to quarantine materials.

- Determine which home delivery locations are viable.

- Secure staffing for home delivery.

- Determine whether a requirement to wear masks should be imposed on the public and/or staff.

Scenario 2: Reopening with some social distancing requirements

Criteria

1. The Stay at Home Order has been canceled and regional, state and national health officials no longer recommend the public stay at home.

2. Strong social distancing recommendations remain in place.

3. Gatherings are limited to less than fifty people.

4. Community members have access to efficient testing and public health officials are able to trace COVID 19 contacts.

5. The healthcare system has the capacity to withstand a moderate outbreak.

6. The library has access to the necessary materials to administer some critical services.

7. The library has access to enough staffing to run said services.

Possible services:

- Metered access to the building by the public to ensure that social distancing is maintained and that no more than the recommended number are gathered within library facilities.

- Core desk functions could resume..

- In-building hold pickup with the use of self-checkouts.

- The ordering and processing of new physical library materials.

- The shelving of returned library materials after a quarantine period.

- Access to library collections by the public.

- Access to checkout services through the use of self check machines.

- Public programs with pre-registration and defined social distancing protocols on specific topics such as economic development that are deemed critical community needs.

- Resumption of home delivery services where appropriate.

- Access to portions of the computer lab with improved social distancing measures, such as the removal of some stations or through making some computers unavailable.

- Possible computer help through virtual means such as screen sharing.

Preparation

- Determine library hours for each location.

- Determine a method to meter access to the building.

- Secure staffing for main service desks.

- Develop a procedure for in-building holds pickup that allows minimal staff contact.

- Develop a self check out procedure that ensures social distancing.

- Schedule staff for ordering and processing duties.

- Develop a paging schedule.

- Design protocols for social distancing in programs.

- Identify key programming where essential community needs are delivered.

- Determine which outreach visit locations are viable.

- Determine which home delivery locations are viable.

- Secure staffing for outreach functions such as outreach visits and home delivery

- Rearrange the computer lab to allow adequate social distancing either by removing stations or placing stations out of order.

- Investigate screen sharing software as a possibility for providing computer help while maintaining social distance.

- Determine whether a requirement to wear masks should be imposed on the public and/or staff.

- Restore mail and package services.

Scenario 3: Full-scale reopening

Criteria

1. The Stay at Home Order has been canceled and regional, state and national health officials have canceled current social distancing and gathering recommendations.

2. A sustained reduction in new COVID 19 cases within the community for at least 14 days.

3. The healthcare system has the capacity to withstand a moderate outbreak.

4. Community members have access to efficient testing and public health officials are able to trace COVID 19 contacts.

5. The library has access to the necessary materials to maintain high hygiene standards.

6. The library has access to enough staffing to run all of its core operations.

Services:

- A resumption of all core services with an increased emphasis on hygiene.

Preparation

- Restore any lab computers that have been removed to accommodate social distancing.

- Clear backlog of quarantined items and return to conventional turnaround on shelving items.

- Restaff and schedule for all operations.

- Determine how virtual programs fit into the spectrum of services going forward.

- Ramp up ordering and processing of materials and clear any backlog.

- Reset changes to due dates and patron block criteria changed at the beginning of the crisis.

Scenario 4: Reopening followed by scaling down services or a second closure due to virus circulation

Criteria

1. The governor and/or regional and state health officials release a second order mandating social distancing or a stay at home order

2. There is a sustained increase in community spread for five days.

3. Local hospitals are no longer able to safely treat all patients requiring hospitalization.

4. Effective testing is not available within the community.

5. The library is unable to maintain the hygiene or staffing necessary to operate.

Services:

- What service would be accessible would depend on the restrictions inherent to any recommendation. The Library could return to Scenario 1 or 2 or revert to a full-scale closure as appropriate.

Sources

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